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SOCIOLOGICAL NOTES.

Investigation of Dispossessed Tenants in New York City.*—

Early in February of last year the University Settlement of New York City was given a check of about \$1200 for relief work, this sum having been apportioned to it in the final settling up of the books of the Citizen's Relief Committee of 1893-94. The amount being small it was finally concluded that it could perhaps be most profitably devoted to the relief of deserving families who were in danger of being dispossessed for non-payment of rent. Accordingly arrangements were made with the street cleaning department whereby extra men, paid by the settlement, were to be put at work on the streets. In only exceptional cases was it proposed to relieve families without a labor equivalent for the payment of the rent. A resident of the settlement, with volunteers assisting him, was placed in charge of the investigation of families served with dispossession papers in one judicial district and upon his decision as to the worthiness or unworthiness and general conditions of each family rested the question of money, or work, relief, or refusal of all relief. Originally, therefore, the investigation was simply conducted as a means of disposing in the best way of the money entrusted to the settlement. But soon the value of the investigation in itself, and for other purposes, in revealing the relations between tenant and landlord and the economic conditions of the poorer class of tenement house dwellers, began to interest the settlement and other societies.

It was realized that here was a field which had been scarcely touched, even by relief giving societies, owing in large part to a traditional policy of "no relief" in questions of the payment of rent. Whether the landlords should be more lenient or the tenants more honest, whether the courts were too kind or too severe, whether rent-dodging was a great evil or the willful hallucination of grudging proprietors, whether rent could be paid or not—all these questions of such vital importance and interest to a complete under-

* Contributed by Francis H. McLean, Fellow in Sociology, University of Pennsylvania.

standing of tenement house life had been so far left the prey of whim and dogmatic statement, unsupported by relevant facts.

From a growing realization of these things, therefore, the investigation assumed a larger aspect and the conclusions finally attained are of considerable scientific interest. The sum held in trust by the settlement lasted for about two months, over the worst part of the winter. Then the Charity Organization Society took up the work, engaging the resident who had had charge of it from the beginning, and it was continued until September 1. The report of the entire investigation is contained in the annual report of the Charity Organization Society, recently issued.

Monthly payment of rent is the almost universal custom in New York City. Generally a tenant is obliged to pay his first month when moving into rooms, but after that there is no hard and fast rule for advance payments, though some landlords insist upon them and will force a tenant to leave if he does not come to time on the first of each month. But most of the owners are more lenient. Unfortunately the report does not have any figures regarding the number of months in arrears each tenant was who was served with dispossession papers. But from the whole tenor of the report it is safe to say that the varying practices of varying landlords and the different practices of the same landlord show most striking contrasts. It is certain that the personal likes or dislikes of the house-keeper are an element in the decisions of landlords. The chief fault which the investigator finds with the landlords is their lack of discretion. He writes, "Though I cannot urge landlords in general to be either more lenient or more strict, I urge them all as strongly as possible to learn more about their tenants; to learn something about their past before they rent their rooms, and to watch them carefully from month to month, or better from week to week."

In the Fifth Judicial District, where the investigations continued during the whole seven months, the number of dispossession complaints sworn to in court ranged from 100 to 250 per week. The population of this district was estimated to be 230,812, in 1894, by the Board of Health. In the Fourth Judicial District in which investigations were made for only the last four months, the weekly number was about the same. The population of this district according to the same authority is 207,367. No attempt was made to visit all this vast number of cases. As far as possible all instances in which dispossession was apparently asked for on other grounds than non-payment of rent were eliminated, though many such cases were found among those investigated. In general there was no selection—

the cases were visited at random—so that the results should be at least typical.

Of the entire 2603 families visited 362 had moved before the investigators came. Of the remaining 2241, 431 were found in need of relief and 454 of time only. The percentage of cases needing relief for the various months is given as follows:

February 4 to April 8,	20
April 20 to April 30,	12.7.
May,	14.2.
June,	21.
July,	12.8.
August,	9.4.

The large percentage for June is accounted for by the tailors' strike, then in progress. A word of explanation may be required regarding the 454 considered worthy of time only. In dispossess cases the court can grant from one to five days to the tenant to move out. Whenever it was thought that the tenant was honest and would in a few days be able to pay his rent or part of it and arrange a compromise with his landlord the investigators recommended to the judges, who relied much on their decisions, the full limit of the law; and in this way saved many respectable families from the shame of eviction, dispossess papers in many cases having been served simply as the result of a quarrel with a landlord or house-keeper.

But what of the 1356 families out of a total of 2241—just sixty per cent—who were found in need neither of relief nor of time? This represents laziness, viciousness and sheer dishonesty. Just how much is rent-dodging, how much personal animosity, and how much personal character, cannot be told from the figures in the report. But we are informed that "for the good of tenants and landlords alike more than half of those dispossessed probably should have been dispossessed more promptly."

It became very early apparent that rent-dodging was figuring largely on the returns, and it was hoped that the investigation would result in improving conditions in this regard. But these expectations were not realized. "But though," explains the investigator, "we heard that 'since they're investigating around, 't'ain't no longer possible to get time from the judge,' we did not to any marked degree decrease the length of time rent-dodgers live rent free. Though we convinced the judge that a certain tenant deserved no extension of time; and he told the landlord that he could get the warrant to evict this tenant at once, yet this landlord generally did not evict him for several days; he would not pay a marshal two

dollars or more to put the goods on the sidewalk until he believed he could not otherwise within a few days get possession of his rooms. Several landlords waited ten days or two weeks before evicting tenants for whom I had recommended to the judge no extension of time. Further, the five days which at most the judge can give are but a short time as compared with the two weeks, or perhaps the two or the five months, for which the landlord collects no rent before he sends the dispossession notice, plus the week or two for which the tenant has to pay no rent in his new rooms. Hence, in so far as we hope to prevent rent-dodging, and to increase the length of time tenants would live and pay rent in the same rooms, and so by increasing the part of the year for which the landlord receives rent to reduce the rent charged—in so far we were dissatisfied."

In conclusion the investigator states his belief that in times when there is considerable employment the investigation and relief of the worthy families in danger of eviction is wise and profitable—it not only saves respectable people from this first step downward, but in many cases prevents their becoming acquainted with the ordinary relief agencies, and thereby losing something of self-reliance.

But more important perhaps is the emphatic recommendation for a change in rent collection and policy. "I urge weekly payments," so reads the report, "of rent, instead of monthly payments throughout tenement houses, as now in model tenements, for the laborer could pay one dollar and a half or two dollars out of each week's wage at once to the landlord far more easily than he can accumulate six or eight dollars, in a month. And I urge landlords to insist on payments at the beginning of each week from all tenants, except those in whose families there is sickness. Even when out of work they should pay their rent out of what they have saved while at work, and in times of unusual distress, or of strikes, from what they get from relief funds or strike funds."

Philadelphia Public Baths.—Early in 1895, the ANNALS reported the organization of the Public Baths Association of Philadelphia and its plans for the future.

By the erection of its first public bath and laundry at the corner of Gaskill and Leithgow streets, between Fourth and Fifth, and Lombard and South streets, in one of the oldest and most thickly populated sections of the city, these plans are soon to become realities.

Early in September last ground was broken and the structure is now nearing completion and will be opened to the public early

* Contributed by Mr. Franklin B. Kirkbride.

in the spring. The building covers a lot 40 feet by 60 feet, is built of hard red brick laid in Flemish bond with dark mortar, and is two and one-half stories high. The construction is of brick and iron and the floors of the baths and laundry are to be of concrete.

Half of the basement is to be fitted up as a public laundry where women can do their family washing on the payment of a small fee, and where the towels used in the baths will also be washed. The basement floor is five feet below the street level, and the laundry, a room 23 by 37 feet, lighted by three large windows, is reached by a stairway leading from the women's hall on the first floor. The room is to be fitted with six sets of tubs, twelve drying closets, ironing tables, a laundry stove, soap boiler, power washer and wringer, and a disinfecting tank to contain the towels thrown down through the towel chutes from the floors above. The room will be light and airy, covered with a cement floor and will be provided with a lavatory. The remainder of the basement will be occupied by the boiler and engine room. It can be reached either from the stairway leading down from the first floor or by a side door on Leithgow street. It will contain an 83 horse-power Harrison safety boiler, two Worthington pumps, a feed water heater, hot water generator, blow-off tank, heater and fan, and an engine to run the laundry machinery. The coal and ash pits will be on the Leithgow street side of the room, while the smoke stack rises from an opposite corner. The hot water generator will have a capacity of 2000 gallons per hour, and the fan will provide forced ventilation for every part of the building.

Two entrances on Gaskill street lead into the first floor of the building. The women's entrance opens into a hall, from which a stairway leads down to the laundry and up to the women's baths on the second floor. The other entrance leads directly into the men's waiting room, a large and airy room lighted by ample windows, wainscoted in pine, and provided with wooden benches. An office so situated as to overlook both this room and the women's hallway is located between the men's waiting room and women's entrance and a single person will be able to take in money and give out towels and soap to both sets of customers, although each department is entirely separate.

From the men's waiting room one enters the men's baths. This department is supplied with twenty-six shower baths, the ring shower being the form adopted, one tub, two water-closets, two urinals and one hand-basin. Allowing twenty minutes to each bather this provides facilities for more than nine hundred baths a day. There will be no swimming pool in the building, shower

baths being used instead. In this respect the example of the People's and Baron de Hirsch Fund Baths of New York, and the overwhelming testimony of medical experts as to the comparative merits of the two systems are being followed. The baths are separated by iron partitions seven feet high, painted white, and over each compartment is stretched a network of heavy wire. The room is lighted on one side by a row of windows above the tops of the baths, and on the opposite side by a skylight and windows, thus securing ample light and thorough ventilation.

The bather enters an outer dressing room about four feet square, and beyond this and separated from it by a swinging iron door, is the inner compartment of the same size, where the shower, supplied with both hot and cold water, is located. The floors of the dressing rooms and baths slope inward and drain into a gutter running along the back of the baths. The partitions between the baths being from three to six inches above the concrete floor, the entire room can be flushed out with ease. The arrangement of the dressing rooms and bathing compartments insures privacy for each bather, and the simplicity of their construction will greatly aid in keeping them pure and clean.

From the women's hallway, on the first floor, stairs lead to the women's waiting room on the second story. This room opens into the women's baths, which are supplied with fourteen showers, three tubs and two water-closets. They are to have a capacity about one-third less than that of the men's department. The room is lighted by a central skylight as well as by small windows on either side above the tops of the bathing compartments.

On the Gaskill street front of the second floor are two rooms fitted up for the use of the janitor, and above these rooms is the tank loft, where two tanks of 3000 gallons capacity each will furnish the building with its water supply.

The plans of the building were prepared by Louis E. Marié, architect, of the firm of Furness, Evans & Co., and are the result of a careful study of the plans of foreign bathing establishments, and of the experience of the People's Baths in New York, the Yonker's Municipal and other baths.

It is proposed to charge each bather a small fee, probably five cents, for the use of the bath, towel and soap, and if the same success attend these baths as the People's Baths in New York, they should become nearly self-supporting.

The Public Baths Association is still engaged in raising the funds for the construction of its building. The land was purchased for \$5750, and the erection of the bath house and laundry will cost

\$22,000 more. Of this sum \$8000 remains to be collected. Donations should be sent to the treasurer of the association at 517 Chestnut street, Philadelphia.

The officers of the Public Baths Association of Philadelphia are as follows: Board of Trustees, Eugene Delano, president; Barclay H. Warburton, chairman of finance committee; Sarah D. Lowrie, secretary, 1827 Pine street; Franklin B. Kirkbride, treasurer, 517 Chestnut street; Charlemagne Tower, Jr.; Mrs. Hunt; Alfred G. Clay; Mrs. Perit Dulles; Mrs. John Sparhawk Jones; Rev. Walter Lowrie; Dr. Lawrence S. Smith.

Causes of Poverty.—The Committee on Statistics of the New York Charity Organization Society, composed of Professors Richmond Mayo Smith, Franklin H. Giddings and Mr. Fred. W. Holls, has attempted a statistical analysis of some of the more important cases treated by that society in recent years. The results have been published in the last annual report of the Charity Organization Society in New York City. The committee took 500 cases, most of them beginning in 1890, and followed the history of each case to date. These 500 cases made applications for relief in this period as follows:

500 applied only once.
 184 applied a second time.
 87 applied a third time.
 35 applied a fourth time.
 12 applied a fifth time.
 7 applied a sixth time.
 4 applied a seventh time.
 3 applied an eighth time.

832

The report goes on to say:

"It was somewhat difficult to distinguish what was a separate application. In many cases the treatment was continuous over several weeks or months; in other cases the committee simply continued the case until it finally disappeared. We have counted it as a separate case only when a definite period of time has elapsed between the last record and a new application from the individual. It is extremely difficult to say exactly when a case is closed. After aid has been given or work found, a district committee will often want to keep an eye on the family and see that it maintains its position. In many difficult cases it is almost absolutely necessary simply to keep them open in hope that something may turn up. There is no system of marking the cards to indicate when a case is really closed.

"The repetition of the cases shows a considerable amount of chronic pauperism, and the real amount is greater than the figures

indicate, for generally those that are repeated remain under treatment for a long time, while many of those which applied only once were simply temporarily embarrassed. We thought of counting the length of period during which each case was under treatment during each application, but the closing of a case is so uncertain, and the record so uncertain, that the experiment was unsuccessful."

In reference to the actual causes of poverty the report is more complete:

"The most interesting, and at the same time the most difficult, problem connected with an analysis of such cases as these is to determine the real cause of destitution. This is one of the most vexed questions among persons engaged in charitable or philanthropic enterprises. The causes of poverty are always complex, and so complex that they are generally incapable of analysis. Again, the causes are immediate or remote, and often the more remote causes are the most important. It requires great experience and intelligence on the part of workers in charity to give even approximately the fundamental reason why a certain family has come to destitution. To classify cases from records without personal knowledge of each case, and then simply to count the cases, is a very inadequate method of arriving at the truth. The primary difficulty, of course, is to reach a classification. The one adopted by Mr. Warner in his book on American charities is: (1) Causes indicating misconduct; (2) Causes indicating misfortune. Under the first head come drink, immorality, laziness, shiftlessness and inefficiency, crime and dishonesty, a roving disposition. Under the second head come lack of normal support, matters of employment, matters of personal capacity, such as sickness or death in family, etc. The trouble with such a classification is that one cause may lie behind another, as drink is often the cause of lack of employment, of sickness or accident. On the other hand, lack of employment may lead to drink, immorality or laziness. In many cases one form of misfortune leads to another, as sickness leads to lack of employment, or lack of employment leads to sickness; and most often various forms of misconduct, such as drink and shiftlessness, immorality and crime, are present in the same person. The personal equation of the investigator and of the tabulator has great influence in determining whether a particular case falls under the head of misfortune or misconduct. The influence of environment and heredity is disregarded in this classification. The whole subject is ably discussed by Mr. Warner in Chapter II of his book.

"With the limited number of cases that have been analyzed in this investigation, it would be impossible to expect any very con-

clusive results. We have endeavored, however, to make up for the small amount of the material by a careful and intelligent analysis, and by approaching the subject from three different points. We have first taken the alleged cause of distress—that is, the reason assigned by the person applying for relief. This, of course, will present the most favorable side, and the one most calculated to excite sympathy. The stress will be laid on misfortune rather than misconduct. The inquiry will be useful as indicating the most common kinds of misfortune. We have, secondly, tabulated the real cause of distress, as gathered by the tabulator from the whole record. This, of course, is the judgment of an outside party, and the emphasis will be laid upon misfortune or misconduct according to the disposition of the investigator. We have, thirdly, the character of the man and woman as gathered from the record. This is supplementary evidence as to the real cause of distress. We go on now to present these three points of view.

ALLEGED CAUSE OF DISTRESS.—SUPPLEMENTARY.

	Princi- pal.	Loss of work.	Sick- ness.	Drink.	Insuf- ficient earnings.	Other causes.
Loss of employment	313	. .	69	1	1	3
Sickness or accident	226	36	. .	1	12	7
Intemperance	25	10	4	. .	2	1
Insufficient earnings	52	. .	7	1	. .	. .
Physical defect or old age . .	45	2	5	1	1	1
Death of wage-earner	40	11	14	. .	4	1
Desertion	40	3	9	. .	4	2
Other causes and uncertain	103	2	3	. .	. .	1
Total	844	64	111	4	24	16

“In this table we consider not the total number of cases, but the total number of applications. . . . but for purposes of analysis this is of little consequence. The cause most frequently alleged is loss of employment, 37.1 per cent; next to that is sickness, 26.7 per cent. Of less consequence are insufficient earnings, physical defect or old age, death of the wage-earner and desertion.

“An attempt was made to follow the example of Mr. Booth and introduce supplementary causes as well as principal causes. About the only result, however, is that sickness often accompanies loss of employment, and that loss of employment often accompanies sickness or accident. It is clearly seen in this whole table how disposed applicants for relief are to attribute their distress to circumstances beyond their control.

“In the following table we have an attempt to analyze the real cause of distress, according to the judgment of the tabulator as

gathered from the full record. In chronic cases the same cause is apt to appear in the successive applications. It was thought that this might lead to undue accumulation of particular causes. A separate tabulation, therefore, was made for the 500 first applications, and then for the total—832 applications. The table is as follows:

THE REAL CAUSE OF DISTRESS.

	<i>First Applications.</i>		<i>Total Applications.</i>	
	Number.	Per cent.	Number.	Per cent.
Lack of employment . . .	115	25.	184	22.1
Sickness or accident . . .	102	20.4	164	19.7
Physical defects or old age .	27	5.4	42	5.0
Death of wage-earner . . .	18	3.6	30	3.6
Desertion	15	3.	24	2.9
Intemperance	87	17.4	166	19.9
Shiftlessness	50	10.	101	12.2
No need	86	17.2	121	14.6
Total	500	100.0	832	100.0

“In this table it will be seen that emphasis is laid on misconduct rather than on misfortune. The difference between a person’s judgment of the cause of his misfortune and another person’s is shown by contrasting the following figures:

	Alleged cause.	Real cause.	Alleged cause.	Real cause.
Lack of employment	313	184	35.9	22.1
Sickness or accident	226	164	26.7	19.7
Intemperance	25	166	.	19.9
Shiftlessness . . . . .	.	101	.	12.2
No real need . . . . .	.	121	.	14.6

“The difference between the two sets of returns is obvious. Where lack of employment and sickness have been alleged as accounting for 539 applications, or 62.6 per cent of the total, they are believed by the tabulator to really account for only 348 applications, or 41.8 per cent. On the other hand, intemperance comes in as the real cause in 19.9 per cent; shiftlessness in 12.2 per cent of the applications, and in 14.6 per cent of the applications it was judged that there was no real need. It is very probable that these judgments are severe, but the result shows how frequently, at least, the personal character is a contributory cause of poverty.

“An attempt was made when reading the records to determine the general character of the man and woman—that is, the adult members of the family. Such classification is at the best very rough, and does not give us much information. It may be said that the character was put down as good unless something distinctly

to the contrary appeared. The results are given in the following table:

PERSONAL CHARACTER OF MAN AND WOMAN.

	Male.	Female.	Total.	Percentages.
Good	122	231	353	45
Criminal	15	1	16	2
Insane . . . . .	..	1	1	..
Intemperate	81	56	137	17
Shiftless	56	52	108	14
Suspicious	13	30	43	6
Untruthful	5	15	20	3
Uncertain	38	65	103	13
Total	330	451	781	100
"Shiftless" includes				
	Male.	Female.	Total.	
Professional beggars	5	5	10	
Loss of independence	1	3	4	
Lack of push	2	1	3	
Laziness	1	..	1	
Extravagance . . . . .	..	2	2	
"Worthless"	7	5	12	
Prostitute . . . . .	..	1	1	
Total	16	17	33	
Shiftless indefinite	40	35	75	
Total	56	52	108	

"It would seem from this table that the judgment of the investigators was lenient. In nearly one-half of the cases the character of the men and women was said to be good.

Goodrich House, Cleveland.—Within the last few months there has been opened in the city an ambitious social settlement house known as "Goodrich House." It is a beautiful bit of Gothic architecture with Renaissance detail, built of Florentine brick, located in one of the poorer sections of the city and erected through the generosity of Mrs. Samuel Mather. It has a frontage on two streets of 122 by 97 feet, is three stories in height and has spacious and commodious quarters for every form of social settlement work. Provision is made for all sorts of clubs and kindergartens. A completely equipped gymnasium, bath rooms, parlors, sewing rooms, a public laundry and reading rooms make Goodrich House one of the finest, if not the finest, institutional house in America. It is presided over by several resident workers. It is hoped that it will prove an agency of great good in reclaiming the section of the city in which it is situated and raising the standard of living of those who participate in its advantages.

Some of the unique features of Goodrich House have been described by the Head Resident, Rev. Starr Cadwallader, in *The Commons* for October as follows:—

“The Goodrich Social Settlement, in Cleveland, is unique among American settlements in that it is the first of the settlements to possess at the time of its organization a building of considerable size, constructed expressly for its use. The possession of such a building presents difficulties and imposes responsibilities which were appreciated, at least in part, by those who planned for such a thing and made it possible. The settlement was incorporated May 20, 1897. The articles of incorporation state that, “The purposes for which this corporation is formed is to provide a centre for such activities as are commonly associated with Christian social settlement work.” The incorporation was made to facilitate the work to be carried on in and through Goodrich House, a building erected at a cost of more than eighty thousand dollars by Mrs. Samuel Mather.

“Work had been going on for two years, which demonstrated the fact that something might be accomplished in the downtown district of Cleveland along such lines as are followed by settlements in other cities. The need for such effort was soon evident. The possibility of organizing and maintaining boys’ clubs was shown by Mr. and Mrs. E. W. Haines, who brought together boys from the street and formed them into clubs, which increased in membership during two or three years to about two hundred. This was done under circumstances not particularly favorable. The rooms obtainable for a meeting place were unattractive and poorly ventilated; nevertheless, the boys came. The greatest difficulty was that of finding helpers who could or would serve with regularity. A sewing school for girls had drawn a considerable number of pupils for some two or three years. Last winter the name “Saturday Club” was given to this gathering, and its program was extended to include recreation in addition to the instruction in sewing. In April, 1895, a guild for women, having for its object mutual helpfulness, was organized from the remnants of a mothers’ meeting.

“These activities were carried on under the auspices of the First Presbyterian Church until Goodrich House was finished, when they were transferred thither to be conducted under its management. These activities, together with one of the kindergartens of the Cleveland Day Nursery and Free Kindergarten Association, for which a room had been provided, formed the nucleus for work when the house was formerly opened, May 20, 1897. . . .

“The house is the result of a plan which was developed and modified in various particulars after the consideration of several years. Originally the sole idea was to provide a place where the parish work of the First Presbyterian Church could be enlarged, as the work of a church so situated might be. To find a suitable site in the immediate vicinity of the church proved a difficult matter. As time went on, each year showed more convincingly that the field was too large for any one church to care for, and that opportunity was offered for many workers of varied gifts. Finally the present location for the building was fixed upon. Meanwhile the settlement idea had been growing and proving its worth wherever conducted in the right spirit. This led to the conviction that the field here was one where a settlement might be more useful than a parish house.

“A name for the building was not far to seek. Twenty-five years ago Rev. Dr. William H. Goodrich was pastor of the First Presbyterian Church. Dr. Goodrich was a man of delightful personality, who combined broad culture with deep sympathy for humanity, and took the greatest interest in the welfare of this locality. His name, suggestive of much that harmonizes with settlement ideals, could be applied with peculiar appropriateness to a home devoted to settlement work.”